

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 49 | Number 8 (Spring 1989)

pps. 728-729

A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa

ISSN 0003-4827

Copyright © 1989 State Historical Society of Iowa. This article is posted here for personal use, not for redistribution.

Recommended Citation

"A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa." *The Annals of Iowa* 49 (1989), 728-729.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.9365>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa, by John C. Gerber, with Carolyn B. Brown, James Kaufmann, and James B. Lindberg, Jr. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1988. viii, 273 pp. Index, photographs. \$24.95 cloth.

A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa is a good book. It combines a lively, well-written narrative with more than three hundred black-and-white photographs interspersed evenly throughout the 140-year history of the institution. The book is divided into six chronological chapters, with each chapter covering the various presidents, student life, prominent faculty, academic issues, physical campus changes, and sports. The chapters are "Johnson County High School, 1847-1859," "The College Years, 1859-1878," "The Emerging University, 1878-1916," "A One-Man Operation, 1916-1934," "Cautious Change, 1934-1964," and "A Major Teaching and Research Institution, 1964-1987."

As an alumnus, I learned much about my university. It was a struggle to open and keep open in 1857 and 1970, and an initial attempt to exclude women was defeated. Many presidents have not been honored with buildings named after them; instead, remembrances have been relegated to dormitory floors. Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., headed the history department, Thomas Hart Benton, Jr., led the Board of Regents, and John Glenn attended Navy Pre-Flight School at Iowa. Some issues span the history of the institution. Debates over the relationship of the people of Iowa and their state government to the university were constant. Whether to emphasize a classical, humanistic approach or practical, scientific instruction in the curriculum was a recurring controversy. Low faculty salaries and lack of funding were also regular problems.

My favorite chapter is chapter four, "A One-Man Operation." Here we learn of Walter Jessup, the longest-serving president during the crucial formative years, 1916 to 1934. Enrollment tripled, and four distinguished schools were created (Journalism, Religion, Fine Arts, and Letters). Students such as George Gallup and Laurence Jones and faculty such as Benjamin Shambaugh and Grant Wood thrived. The Quadrangle was built, and the West Campus was begun. Iowa was suspended from the Big Ten in 1930 for maintaining an athletic slush fund. This was a dynamic time, and the authors have captured the moment.

There are a few quibbles to be made, mostly with chapter six. The authors give Howard Bowen's presidency (1964-1969) rather high marks without much analysis. To blame the deficiencies of Bowen's administration on student demonstrations is not entirely accurate. Bowen may have been an idea man, but he was also obtuse and aloof

from the students and the people of Iowa. These traits undermined his presidency. Moreover, one point of chapter six suggests that the Old Armory Temporary (known as Old Pink) was burnt by students (215), when the fire was officially caused by faulty wiring (an aside, p. 216). Jerry Sies may have made a citizen's arrest of Senator Tom Riley, but he also made one of Howard Bowen that is not mentioned. And the hostility that students felt toward Iowa Book and Supply Company was primarily due to the attempts of that bookstore to force out competition (notably Hawkeye Bookstore) and to gouge students on returned book reimbursements. These are, however, minor matters when compared with the overall quality of this work.

One last word should be said about the photographs. This is a particularly rich collection. Most are carefully placed and explained. There is some chronological displacement in the first chapter, but after all these were more difficult to locate. The collages at the end of each chapter are very effective.

For historians, alumni, students, faculty, and Iowans, this is a book not to be missed. It is a model for future pictorial histories of educational institutions.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

JOHN R. WUNDER

Is There a Moral Obligation to Save the Family Farm?, edited by Gary Comstock. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987. xxvii, 427 pp. Tables, references, suggested readings, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

This book, obligated to answer the question of its title, is between a rock and a hard place as much as is the family farm. It offers no unqualified answer, but refuses to put on a tragic mien. The Jeffersonian family farm, lauded as the backbone of American democracy, is no more. In its place, however, is the working small farm inhabited by part-time farmers whose outside income exceeds crop income but who strongly desire to sustain their agrarian lifestyle.

Contemporary family farming depends upon mechanization, agricultural science and sophisticated management; there is little nostalgia here about slopping the pigs and plowing the furrow behind a mule. The gold old days were terribly hard work with little reward. The problem is whether there are enough family farmers left to be statistically, culturally, and politically important. They are not economically significant; they are not among the 160,000 "primary farmers" identified by the USDA back in 1980 and not among the 50,000 corporate superfarms promised (or threatened) for the 1990s. And, over the last fifty years, have those who are left become, unwittingly and unwill-

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.